

Country Reports on Terrorism 2018: Sri Lanka

Overview: There were no terrorist attacks reported in Sri Lanka in 2018. In June, a suspected former Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) member was arrested in possession of a uniform, LTTE flag, claymore mine, and other military equipment. In July, Sri Lankan naval forces excavated a former LTTE training camp, where they uncovered a large stash of military equipment and bombs. Sri Lanka remains vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist financing. Sri Lanka strengthened its counterterrorism efforts by improving its counterterrorism legislation, enhancing border security, implementing AML/CFT measures, and collaborating with numerous international organizations and donor countries, including the United States. Counterterrorism cooperation and training is a growing part of the U.S. relationship with Sri Lanka. For example, Sri Lankan Coast Guard officers attended and took part in several courses conducted by the Department of State's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program in 2018. Additionally, the Sri Lankan government regularly sends officers to U.S.-sponsored regional counterterrorism workshops and courses.

2018 Terrorist Incidents: There were no reported terrorist incidents in Sri Lanka in 2018.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Government of Sri Lanka continued to use the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), enacted in 1982 as a wartime measure, which gives security forces broad powers to search, arrest, and detain individuals. In February 2017, the government announced it suspended making arrests under the PTA because of widespread concerns about several of its provisions; however, the government made at least four arrests under the PTA in 2018. An estimated 70 to 130 individuals remain in detention from prior PTA arrests. The draft Counter Terrorism Act (CTA) set to repeal and replace the PTA obtained cabinet approval September 18 and was submitted as a draft law to parliament on October 9. According to international and domestic legal experts, there are significant flaws in the draft legislation, but the CTA represents a significant improvement over the PTA.

The Special Task Force is a unit of the Sri Lanka Police Service specializing in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations and a major security arm of the state charged with ensuring security of top government and foreign government officials, protecting sensitive terrorist targets, and suppressing activities that pose a threat to national security. There is also a Terrorism Investigation Division within the regular police structure. In November, President Sirisena moved the Sri Lanka Police Department from the Ministry of Law and Order to the Ministry of Defense.

Border security remained a significant issue for the Sri Lankan government. In July, the Sri Lankan National Border Management Committee, with assistance from the UN Migration Agency, launched a new integrated border management strategy. The strategy aims to promote inter-agency collaboration and move toward intelligence-driven, risk-based border control. The Sri Lankan government expanded its partnership with the U.S. Departments of State, Homeland Security, Defense, and Energy on securing its maritime border. The U.S. Coast Guard, under the EXBS program, continued to train Sri Lanka Coast Guard and Navy personnel on border and export control matters, and the Government of Sri Lanka continued to cooperate with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Department of Energy through the container security initiative, megaports, and related initiatives. The Government of Sri Lanka continued to collaborate with the EU Immigration Department on an API system, which transmits passenger information to Sri Lankan immigration officials upon arrival.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Sri Lanka belongs to the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), a FATF-style regional body. Sri Lanka's FIU is a member of the Egmont Group. Although it is neither an important regional financial center nor a preferred center for money laundering, Sri Lanka remains vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist financing. In 2017, the FATF added Sri Lanka to its "grey list" for deficiencies across its AML/CFT regimes. Sri Lanka agreed to an action plan to address several AML/CFT vulnerabilities.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the [*International Narcotics Control Strategy Report \(INCSR\), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*](#).

Countering Violent Extremism: There were no reported changes in 2018.

International and Regional Cooperation: Sri Lanka continued to cooperate with numerous donor countries and regional partners to improve its land and maritime border security. Sri Lanka is a partner nation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. In March, Sri Lanka participated in the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate sub-regional workshop in New York on national CVE strategies. Additionally, in November, legal experts and port and maritime security officers from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and the Maldives attended a sub-regional workshop on implementing maritime counterterrorism instruments at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London, hosted jointly by the UNODC and IMO Counter Terrorism Committee.